



FILM: **UNDINE**

FDG RATING: 3.8 ☺☺☺☺○

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Christian Petzold: *director*
Paula Beer: *actress, Undine*
Jacob Matschenz: *actor, Johannes*
Franz Rogowski: *actor, Christoph*

DATE: August 22, 2021

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **UNDINE**

The film, *Undine*, gets its title from the mythological water nymph who becomes human when she falls in love with a man but is doomed to die if he is unfaithful to her. Undine is also the name of the main character, a pretty young woman in her 20s, who works as an historian/guide at the Senate Administration for Urban Development in central Berlin. She specializes in the urban development of modern-day Berlin.

We first meet Undine on her short work break as she sits across from Johannes at a small table just outside a tiny café across from the government building where she works. He has met someone else. "If you leave me, I'll have to kill you," Undine tells Johannes. He says, "I know". She asks him to wait at the café until her next break but when she returns, he is not there.

Enter handsome, Christoph, an industrial under water diver, who sweeps her off her feet in a very wet and watery accident in the coffee shop as a large fish aquarium tank falls and breaks soaking both of them. Their romantic chemistry is immediate.

When Johannes reappears later in the film, his destiny can't be avoided.

Most discussion participants enjoyed the magical, mysterious ambiance of the film while aware of the intense emotions beneath the surface. Others described the film as wistful and also having the element of suspense.

History, mythology, romance, and even architectural theory intertwine. Undine's lectures were surprisingly captivating with commentary on how we can change things, replace one building with another, but there are aspects of the human condition that remain the same. Some buildings in Berlin are hundreds of years old. We can alter the architecture, but the history and the mythology remain. Undine explains that the age-old castle was demolished during the Socialist era and is now being reconstructed. This leads to the paradox that an 18th-century palace is being (re)built in the 21st century, as if "progress were impossible." The idea that cities and buildings constantly change and mutate but always retain something of their essence. This theme also applies to the characters in their modern reenactment of the Undine myth.

Beautifully implausible, *Undine* collected a wistful score of 3.8 on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best).



See you at the movies!

Adriane Dedic, adedic@pacbell.net

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